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## RECYCLING DYNAMO WILL BE ON 'ELLEN'

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*News Columnist*

**Andrew** Talkish wasn't after fame -- only a cleaner environment -- when he started a door-to-door recycling campaign in his neighborhood two years ago. But the 5-year-old Columbia boy's cries for conservation have been making the rounds in the community -- and soon they will be heard across the nation.

**Andrew** and his parents, Johnathan and Jan Talkish, are in California this week for a taping of "The Ellen DeGeneres Show." The youngster was selected to appear on the show after producers learned of his avid recycling practices, which were first reported in The State in August. The episode featuring **Andrew** airs at 4 p.m. today and can be seen locally on WLTX-19. "I'm telling everybody about recycling," **Andrew** said.

But for the better part of two years, his actions have spoken for themselves.

Since he was 3, **Andrew** has devoted his Tuesday mornings to helping collect and sort items left out for recycling when the city crew made its way through the Chestnut Hill Plantation community near Irmo. His efforts have been praised by the crew members, who have come to expect the weekly helping hands.

Shortly after **Andrew's** story appeared in The State, several accolades followed. He was featured as a WLTX Role Model and later recognized by the governor's office, the city of Columbia and the Department of Health and Environmental Control.

Then came the call from the "Ellen" show.

Johnathan Talkish said one of the producers told them the show had heard about **Andrew** and was hoping to put together a segment that was environmentally friendly and involved children.

"She asked to talk with him (**Andrew**), and it went really well," he said.

Amy Prenner, publicist for the "The Ellen DeGeneres Show," said the staff learned about **Andrew's** passion for recycling on the Internet, noting he was an ideal guest.

"Because of his age and his awareness of the environment, we thought he would be a great guest," Prenner said.

The show's production crew traveled to Columbia last week to shoot footage of **Andrew** at home.

"I'm still floored," Jan Talkish said. "I told John last week, I would not believe it until they were

knocking on our door, and sure enough, they were at 8 a.m."

From home, the cameras followed **Andrew** to his kindergarten class at Oak Pointe Elementary School, where recycling also is a big hit.

"We have this big bin out in the hallway (at school), and every day we drop things off in it," **Andrew** said. "They take paper and plastic and cans and cardboard."

While gaining him national recognition, **Andrew's** passion for recycling has earned him center stage on many local fronts, as well. Next month, Columbia City Council will recognize the youngster at its regular meeting. In the spring, DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling will honor him at its annual awards program, which recognizes recycling's top people, programs and projects.

But soon **Andrew** could be making another trip to the West Coast and taking his place on another well-known stage -- "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno."

Representatives from the show contacted the family recently about having **Andrew** appear, Johnathan Talkish said, adding an exact date has not been set.

"It's wild," his father said. "This was beyond anything that we could ever have thought about. It's neat and it's a once-in-a-lifetime thing, and we are just trying to savor it and enjoy it."

**Andrew** -- who has been known to scold even his parents for mixing plastics with the regular household garbage -- is seemingly not awed by prospects of lights, camera and action. Before this week's taping, he was determined to keep his message on point and was optimistic about turning others mean and green.

"I'm going to tell them why it's good to recycle and all that stuff."

(1) by FILE PHOTOGRAPH/ THE STATE - **Andrew** Talkish takes recycling seriously, especially when city crews are collecting in his neighborhood.

(2) by MIKE ROZMAN/WARNER BROS. - **Andrew** Talkish, of Columbia, tells TV talk show host Ellen DeGeneres a thing or two about recycling.

(3)

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